



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Deval L. Patrick
GOVERNOR

Timothy P. Murray
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ian A. Bowles
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: January 3, 2008

Contact: Robert Keough
(617) 626-1109
Lisa Capone
(617) 626-1119

Commonwealth's Toxic Use Reduction Program Sets Strict New Reporting Threshold for Hazardous Chemicals *Office of Technical Assistance will help Companies Find Less Toxic Alternatives for Certain Substances*

BOSTON – Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Ian Bowles today announced strict new reporting thresholds for certain hazardous industrial chemicals – trichloroethylene (TCE), cadmium, and cadmium compounds. Companies that use at least 1,000 pounds of these chemicals annually must now report their use to the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and begin transitioning to less toxic alternatives.

In compliance with 2006 amendments to the Massachusetts Toxic Use Reduction Act (TURA), the Administrative Council of the state TURA program voted in October to designate these three chemicals as higher hazard substances – lowering reporting thresholds tenfold effective January 1, 2008. The Administrative Council, which Secretary Bowles chairs, is expected to name additional higher hazard substances during 2008.

Cadmium and its compounds are confirmed human carcinogens and pose potential reproductive hazards, while TCE is classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as a probable human carcinogen. The acute health effects of TCE exposure can also include dizziness, unconsciousness, irregular heart beat, brain damage and memory loss.

Lowering the TURA benchmark for these chemicals to 1,000 pounds from 10,000 pounds is expected to expand by 60 to 110 companies the number of Massachusetts firms required to report their use. Industries that use significant amounts of TCE, cadmium and cadmium compounds and would likely be subject to the new requirement include manufacturers and users of specialty adhesives and paints; companies that process certain plastics; electroplaters; and firms involved in industrial degreasing and cleaning.

-more-

“Since its inception in 1990, the Commonwealth’s Toxic Use Reduction program has helped Massachusetts businesses reduce toxic chemical use by 41 percent and cut waste byproducts associated with toxic chemical use by 65 percent,” Secretary Bowles said. “EEA’s Office of Technical Assistance and Technology will help companies affected by this new reporting requirement find and implement less toxic, cost effective alternatives that will allow them to operate more safely while remaining competitive in the global economy.”

As part of the TURA requirements, companies using at least 1,000 pounds of these chemicals must, beginning in 2010, prepare plans on how they intend to reduce use of these substances and file plan progress updates with MassDEP. Engineers and chemists from the Office of Technical Assistance and Technology (OTA) will provide confidential, on-site support to help companies identify, evaluate and implement less toxic alternatives to these three higher hazard substances. In addition, UMass-Lowell’s Toxic Use Reduction Institute runs a Surface Solution Cleaning Laboratory that helps Massachusetts business find effective substitutes for TCE.

Other aspects of the 2006 TURA amendments streamline reporting requirements for industry, and allow companies flexibility in preparing resource conservation plans for energy, water and materials use.

For more information on toxic use reduction, visit <http://www.mass.gov/envir/ota/>.

###